

POETIC SYMBOLS IN IGBO POEMS

BY

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Abstract

Poetry is the set of writing stories, experiences, thought into verse. It is one of the three literary genres. A symbol is something that represents something else. An object, person, place, event or actors that suggests more than its literary meaning. Although symbols are indirect, they are designed to clarify one's understanding of what they describe. Poet frequently uses symbols to capture readers' interest and imagination. Symbols include traditional symbols or conventional symbols and private symbols etc. Traditional or conventional symbols are symbols that hold roughly the same meaning for members of a given society. While the private symbols are the one that has acquired certain meaning from a

single poet's repeated use of it. Since writers' tool is word made possible by the language use, symbols have become an effective tools and technique with which Igbo poets unfold societal and moral ills in the society. Through a conscious, art and artistic, rendition of symbols in poetry, realities of human lives disguised under the umbrella of poetry are portrayed

Introduction

The word symbol derives from the Greek verb *symballein*, 'to throw together', and its noun *symbolon*, 'mark', 'emblem', 'token', or 'sign. It is an object, animate or inanimate, which represents or stands for something else. A symbol is something that represents something else. An object, person, place, event or action can suggest more than its literal meaning. A handshake between two world leaders might be simply a greeting, but if it is done ceremoniously before cameras, it will be a symbolic gesture signifying unity, issues resolved and joint policies that will be followed. We live in a world surrounded by symbols. Meyer(1997:137) says "when people started buying a seventy-thousand-dollar Mercedes-Benz , we get a quick glimpse of not only an expensive car but an entire lifestyle that suggests opulence, , executive offices and power. One of the reasons some buyers are willing to spend much money for a single Mercedes-Benz is that they are aware of the cars symbolic value". A symbol is a vehicle for two things at once; it functions as itself and it implies meanings beyond itself. The meanings suggested by a symbol are determined by the context in which they appear. Nwaokoye(2012:159) noted that "object or an

action that means more than its literal meaning is a symbol. That it has two parts to a meaning: the literal and the figurative meaning. Example, green white green as colours is not only a mere colour but a symbol of Nigeria as a country.”

Because symbols depend on contexts for their meaning, literary artists provide those contexts so that the reader has enough information to determine range of meanings suggested by a symbol. A symbol differs from an allegorical sign, in that it has a real existence, whereas an allegorical sign is arbitrary. It is a narrative technique used by the poet to pass information to readers at different stages of the narration. Poet place symbols in strategic locations in poetry, including the title. Cuddon(2014:899) says “scales, for example symbolized justice; a dove symbolized peace; a goat symbolized lust; the lion symbolized strength and courage; the rose flower symbolized beauty; the lily symbolized purity; the stars and stripe symbolized America and its states;; the green, white, green colors symbolized Nigeria and its states. The cross symbolized Christianity; red, black and white colors symbolized glory, blood and mourning”. Actions and gestures are also symbolic. The clenched symbolizes aggression. Beating of the breast symbolized remorse. Arms raised denote surrender. Moreover, most religious and fertility rites are rich with symbolic movements and gestures, especially the Roman Mass and Igbo traditional religion.

Literature Review

A symbol, then, is any concrete thing or any action in a poem that implies a meaning beyond its literal sense. Symbol according to Obafemi, Bodunde, Ejeagha and Odido (2002:14) “... is the objects, events, relationships that are represented by an object. A person or object may be then represented as abstract idea. When an image is used repeatedly both as a presentation and as a representation”, it becomes a symbol. In symbolism, the relationship usually, not open but has to be discovered through close reading.

Gwynn (2002:48) says symbols “... may be traditional or private symbols. A traditional symbol holds roughly the same meanings for members of a given society. In poetry, poets make use of traditional symbols to enhance the quality of their work” However certain flowers, colors, natural objects and religious emblems possess meanings that can generally agree on. A white lily and a red rose suggest, respectively, mourning and passion. In Igbo cultures black dress associate with mourning and red dress with purity and innocence. Dawn and rainbows are traditional natural symbols of hope and new beginnings. *ọfọ* in Igbo culture is a traditional symbol, though a religious symbol that denote truthfulness and honesty etc. It would be unlikely for a poet to mention a cross without expecting readers to think of its Christian symbolism. A private symbol is the symbol that has acquired certain meanings from a single poet’s repeated use of it. Some visionary poets devised complicated private symbolic systems, a sort of alternative mythology and understanding the full import of these symbols

becomes primarily the task of critics who have specialized in these poets. The use of symbol is very crucial in literary works, especially in poetry. The poet use symbols to beautify their works, thereby, saying more with fewer words especially ills that happen around the world.

Some of the Symbols In Igbo Poems And Examples of Each

Ọfọ AS A Traditional Symbol (By Chukuezi)

Abụ m osisi
Ma aha m bụ eziokwu
ụkwụije m bụ umereoma
onụokwu m bụ naanị otu
Mụ na ogu bụ nwanne
Amaghi m onye ji m
Ihe m ma bụ naanị eziokwu
Maka na ndụ bụ mkpa m
Ndụ bụ eziokwu
I kụọ m n'ala, ala amaa jijiji
Mụọ niile eteta n'ura
Ndi nnaanyi ha esi n'ilikulie.

Onye okwu asị tie m n'ala
Aka ya akponwụọ
I jiri m gwuo egwu
Amadioha etidaa gi n'ihuezi gi
Mụ na nze na-eso
Akpa ọzọ bụ ụrụ m ebe obibi
oha nwe m, mụ nwe oha
Onye mewe ihe hapụ m

ọ hapụla ọgu, eziokwu, ezi udo
Ihe mere ya, aka m adighi ya
Osisi ka m bu ma akpakariri m mmadu niile n'ike
Abu m onyeozu Chineke
I nwee ako, tinye m n'akpa gi mgbe niile

Abu m eze eziokwu
Ebe obibi nke eziomume
Ngabiga omenaala
oso ndu agwu ike
Onye ji m anaghi ato n'ije
Onye ji m aka ga-enwe mmeri
Otu mua hala
Aka abuo ka e ji ibu m.

I am a tree
My name is truth
My step is doing good
My speech is one
Ogu and I are brothers
Am unaware of one who holds me
What I know is truthfulness
Because, life is important to me
Truth is life
When you hit me on the ground, earth will shake
All gods will wake up
Our forefathers will be raised from their graves

If a liar hit me on the ground
His hands will be lifeless
When you use me to play
Amadioha gods will kill you in front of your compound

I and Nze (title) are one
Ọzọ (title) bag is where I live.
Crowd belongs to me and I belong to the crowd
When you forget me
It means you have forgotten; truths and peace.
Whatever that happened to you is none of my business.
I am a tree, but am stronger than human beings
I am a messenger of God
If you have sense, put me in your bag always

I am the king of the truth
The bedrock of honesty
The Passover of culture
I am not tired of issues in life.
If you have me; you will never be forsaken
If you have me, you will ever be victorious
Irrespective of my size
I am carried with two hands.

Ọfọ ndụ (Anọzie)

Ndụ nwoke
Ndụ nwaanyi
Elu rie
Ala rie
Egbe bere
Ugo bere
Ndụ mmiri
Ndụ azụ
Mmiri atala
Ma azụ anwụla

Hee-he
Anaghị egbu egbe
Egbe ruchakwaa
Ya ebukwala mbe
Okirikiri
Ka a na-agba ukwu ose
Nkirinkiri
Ka a na-ekiri ododo
E jighi ya eli ozu

Ọfọ na Ogubu nwanne
Ọfọ bu eziokwu
Ọfọ ka ide ji awa ala
Ogu bu aka di ọcha

Nwoke si na ya ji ọfọ
Nwanyị si na ya ji ọfọ
Onye ji ọfọ?
ọfọ maara onye ji ya

Chukwu okike
Gị buisi, buru ọdu
Nye m ndu, nye m ahuike
Gị bu olileanya nwa ogbenye
Ndu bu isi
Ndu ka akụ
Ndu ka ego
ọfọ ndu ka m na-ago
ọ bughị ọfọ ọnwu
ọ biara egbu m, gbuo onwe ya
Eji m nke onye?
ọfọ m bu ka m hu umu umu m

Ka m i iogologo ndu
Jiri anya m hu ihe uwa ga-abu
Ebelebe chokwa anu igbu
Ya buru be ndi iro m
Kamaibun'ulo m
Ogologo ndu, ahuike
omumu na agamnihu
Isi, o bughu odu
Oke o bughu nwunye
Eze, o bughu ogbenye
Amadi o bughu ohu
Diala o bughu osu
Kwe ka m buru onye ndu
o bughu onye e du edu
Onyeije ka m bu
Aga m ala be m
ula ka mman'oku chikporo
Chioma
Kpoo m oku
Na nari afo na iri abuo
Ka m ruo oru i ziri m.

Life of man
Life of woman
Let the sky eat
Let the earth eat
Let the kite perch
Let the eagle perch
Let water live
And let fish live
May water never dried up
And may fish never die

Hee-he
They don't kill eagle
But eagle don't carry
Tortoise away.
One can run around pepper plant
One can look at the ododo plant
But cannot use ododo to bury the dead.

Ọfọ and Ogu are brothers
Ọfọ is being truthful
It was ọfọ that the flood
Uses to dig the ground.
Ọfọ is being honest

Male said he is with ọfọ
Female said she is with ọfọ
Who is with ọfọ?
But ọfọ knew who are his.

God the creator
The beginning and the end
Give me life and health
You are the hope of the poor
Life first
Life is greater than wealth
Life is greater than money
Long life (ọfọ ndụ) is what I am praying for
Not death (ọfọ ọnwụ)
He who wants to kill me should
Kill himself.
Am I a debtor to anyone?
My prayer is to see my great grand children

Let me live long life to see what the world will turn to be
When evil things want to happen;
Let it be to my enemy's house and not in my house
Long life, good health, more child bearing and prosperity
Head not tail
Male not female
King not poor
An indigene not servant
An indigene not outcast
Let me be the leader
And not to be lead
I am a sojourner
Going home is better, when God called you
Good God
Called me
In hundred and twenty years (120)
So that I can do what you sent me to do.

Ọfọ ndụ (BY NWADIKE)

Chukwu Abị ama,
ọbasị bi n'elu,
ọka ọkaa,
Amaama Amasị amasị
Onye bi n'elu,
ogodo ya na-akpu n'ala,
Biko bị a goziere anyị oji .

Ngi onye bu ụwa n'aka,
Onye ji ji;jide mma,
Onye i wanyere,
O rie.
Ebere gị dị egwu,

omijiko gi enweghi atu.
Ngi onye no n'elu na-ele ala anya,
Biko bia goziere anyi oji

Agbara ukwu na agbara nta
Mmuo ukwu na mmuo nta
Agwu ukwu na agwu nta
Bia nu taa oji

Ala umudioji
Ala umukwaradim
Ala umezeala
Ala umuduuru
Ala umukwraoha
Ala umudioma
Bi anutaraoji
Ndi nnanna anyi ha
Ndi onon na ndo ahụ onwa
unu ndi chiri echiche ukwu,chie nke nta
Lekwa nu oji

unu ndi ji ike
unu ekwela anyi nwu
unu ekwela anyi fu
Maka na okenye anaghi anoro n'ulo
Ewu amuo n'ogburu
Chuooro nu anyi ihe ojoo
Luooro nu anyi ogu

Biko nu unu ndi nwe mmadu
unu ekwela ka uche gaara
Ndi na-echere anyi echiche ojoo

Nara nu ha aka chie n'ala
Ka ọchụ nwa ọkụkọ nwere mwemwe ọso

Ọchọ anyị ọnwụ
Ya burukwa ọkụkọ ụzọ lakpuo ụra
Ọsị nkwa anyị achala acha
Mpama abakwala nke ya n'ibu,
ọhụrụ anyị ata aka n'eze,
Ihe ọjọọ kurukwa mmiri ghụọ ya ahụ

Biko nu, mgbe ọ na-ada n'ihu,
Anyị nọ n'azụ,
Ya na-ada n'azụ,
Anyị nọ n'ihu.
Wepurụ nụ anyị ụgali
Wepurụ nụ anyị otanishi
Wepurụ nụ anyị ume ngwu
Wepurụ nụ anyị anyaukwu
Wepuru nu anyị tigbuo tigbuo

Nye nu anyị ihunanya, eziokwu
Umeala na idiuchu
Maka na onye jide ibe ya jide,
Udo adiri
Ma anyị maara ekpe,
Ma anyị amaghị ekpe,
Jiri nu aka unu meruo-o
Iha a!

God of mercy
God who lives on high
Most high

Omniscience
Who lives on high
Your cloth touches the ground
Please come bless this kolanut

You carried the world on your hands
You own everything
You give to anyone whom you wish
Your mercy is fearful
And your compassion has no comparison

Both little and big gods
Both little spirit and big spirit
Both little I gods and big gods
Come and eat kola.

Land of ụmụdijii
Land of ụmụokwaradim
Land of ụmụezeala
Land of ụmụduuru
Land of ụmụokwaraoha
Land of ụmụdioma
Come and eat kolanut
Our forefathers
You see in secret
Great titled men both big and little
Look at the kolanut.

You have strength
Don't allow us to die
Don't allow us to lost
Because goat cannot give birth

To its young ones in the presence of adult
While rope is on its neck
Chase evil away from us;
Fight for us.

You the owners of the human race
Don't allow our enemies to
Succeed in their plan against us
So that those who chase after
The cock will fall
While cock will run away.

Those who want us to die
Should sleep before the cock
Those who want our palm
Fruit to remain unripe
Mpama (animal) should not visit theirs
Those who always see us and bite
Their fingers in regret
Let them bath with evil

Please, when there is war in the front;
Let us be at the back
And when it happening at the back,
Let us be at the front,
Remove hunger from us
Remove hardship from us
Remove laziness of youthful age from us
Remove greedy from us
Remove conflicts among us

Give us love ,truthfulness,

Humility and hard work.
Because when you have,
Another has
Peace will reign.
Whether we pray well or not.
Do it the way you want it to be.
Amen.

INTERPRETATIVE ANALYSIS

In Igbo land, ọfọ symbolized peace, truth, fair play, hone stand a symbol of prayer etc. Whenever ọfọ is being mention in Igboland, what came to people's mind is uprightness. ọfọ frowned at evil and can kill anyone evil hands that touches it. It is not everyone can that can hold ọfọ. In avillage, the person that holds ọfọ is the eldest man in the village, in the kindred is the eldest man among the kinsmen. In the family, the first son is the person that will hold ọfọ. According to Ofomata (2012:569) says ọfọ "is a tree like any other tree in the forest. It is a very tall tree. No one has cut its branches, rather its branches due fell down on it own unlike other trees. Because of its nature, Igbo people see ọfọ tree as a sacred tree and use any of its fallen branches as a symbol of worship or prayer.

Chukwu Abiamobasi, Amama Amasi Amasi (The name of God). Agbaranta, Agbiraukwu (big and small god), Chie aka n'ala (Hit hand on the ground), Mwemwe ọsọ (running away safely), buru ọkụkụ ụzọ lakpuo (sleeping before the cock), achelaacha (Never ripe) I, ta aka n'eze (biting finger in regret), lhe ọjọọ wuọ ya ahụ, (bathing with evil), Ugali (hunger), Otanishi (hardship),

Umengwu (laziness), anyaukwu (greed), tigbuo zògbue(crisis) All these symbolized that ọfọ is a small god who conveyed messages to human beings from God especially when one is upright. It intercedes and fight one's battle against the enemies. Igbo people believed that ọfọ is capable of giving victory in time of war by restoring peace, giving abundance in time of hardship and hunger. In this research, the three poet; Chukuezi, Nwadike and Anozie have the same view about ọfọ. In their different works, the poets showed that ọfọ has these qualities; Ihunanya (love), eziokwu (truth), Ndu egbe bere ugbo bere (let the kite perch and let the eagle perch) etc. Hence, Chukuezi, Nwadike and Anozie has same impression about ọfọ therefore, ọfọ is a traditional symbol in Igbo land

Example of Private Symbol in Igbo Poems

ỤWA (BY EKECHUKWU)

Uwana-atọ naanị nnnunu
Kedu ka ọga-adị?
Ihe dum na-aga ngwa ngwa
Olee ka ọga-adị?

Ihe niile dizucha mma
ụwa ga-abụ gini?
Mmadụ niile buru ndị ọma
Olee ka ndụ ga-adị

Ọ ga-adị anyị ka ụwa anyị nọ
Ga-abụnaanị mma,
Ejighi ihe ọjọọ ma atụ

Mma enweghi isi.

Uwa buru naani ihe oma
O gaghị adi uto,
A nọ mmiri ilu, nọ nke uto
Ihe di iche adi

O buru na e nweghi agha
A gaghị ahụ udo
Madụjekwughị ihe ike
ọ gaghị ama ihe.

Nwaanyi alughị di naabo
O gaghị ama ihe,
Madụ buo mmiri na mmanya
O hunke ka aru

The world is salty
How will it be?
If everything moves very fast
How will it be?

If all things are good
How will the world look like?
If everyone is of good behavior
How will life be?

How will it be to us, if the
World is for good deeds only.
Without citing instances of evil;
Good deed is of no use.

If the world is only for good deeds
Things will not work out well
When you drink bitter water and
Good water then,
One can now differentiate
Between the two.

When there is no war
There will be no peace
One will never be wise
Till he meets misfortune.

If woman did not marry
Two husbands
She will never be wise,
When one carried the
Water and wine;
He can now say which one is heavier
Than the other.

ỤWA (BY NEBOLISA)

Uwakwe, ụwa amaka, ụwa emelam, ụwa egbuchulam
Ndi a niile aha a na-aza aza.
Ụwa bu ahia; ndi na-abị a abị a,
Ndi a na-ala ala,
Onyezuta mma;
Onye zuta njo,
Mgbe oge ya ruru, o laa.

ụwaezuoke ,mmekorita ka mma i ji bi n'ụwa.
Ka onye obula nwee ike inyeritara nwanne ya aka.

Mmadu ikwu naani ya, odudu atagbuo ya

Ihuochi kwesiri iji bi n'owa,
Maka na o dighi onye uwa tooro ute.
I nwere ike nwee ike ulo, nwee ugboala,
Ma gi e nwelanwa,
E nwere ike i nweenwa,
Ma gi ahula nri na ego, Iga-ejizu ha.

Ewoo! uwaezuoke, onye si n'owa ya kacha mma?
Onye si n'owa gwuru n'ebe ya no?
Onye ka uwazuuru?
Onyesi na uwa zuuru ya;
Ya were nkata kutemmiri, ka anyi nuo.

Uwakwe, Uwaemeka, Uwaemelum, Uwaegbuchulam.
All these are names answered by people.
The world is like a market
Some people will be going to the market
While some will be returning
Whether one bought good materials or bad one
When your time comes,
You go.

One can never satisfied with the world
To be united to one another is the
Best way to live in the world
So that one can help one another
Being alone makes the world very
Difficult to live in.
When you are alone
An insect (odudu) will come and kill you

Live in the world with smiling face
Because no condition is permanent.
You may have house and car;
But you will not bear children;
You may bear children
But there will be no money
To take care of them.

Ewoo! One can never be satisfied with the world
Who said his own world?
Better than the others?
Who said the world is ending with him?
Who is satisfied with the world?
Should give us water to drink
Using basket.

IJE ụwa (BY OKOYE)

Ijeụwa!

Onye ọ dighị ihe o bu, adighị ihe ọ ga-akwụ
Onye enweghị nwa, nwa anaghị anwụrụ ya
Nwaanyị enweghị di, agaghị eru ajadu
Okọ kporo na-aga n'ụzọbuulo ya n'uche
O nwere nwa ka o nwere nwaanyị ?

O nyedighị ihe o ji, adighị ihe ọ na-egosi
Onye nwere ụkwụ ka ụkwụ na-akpo
Onye nwere ike ka otoro na-agba
Onye enweghị ego anaghị enweche nji
Etufuola m ihe bu onye nwere ihe
Ka ọ bu na ọ bughị nwaanyị aga
Ka a na-akọrọ na nwa na-ata arụ n'afọ

Ebe onye na-eri ka ọ nwụ si abia
Ebe onye na-eke ka ọnwụ si-epu
ọchu n'ike na-anwụ n'ike
Oje na nwayọọ anaghị emeru ahụ
ọkụ nwuo gidigidi
ọ nyuọ piatapiata
Ngwuru gbachie ọkara ụmụna dimma
iF one did not carry load ,nothing will break
iF one do not bear children
There will be no death of children
If a woman does not have husband,
She will not be a widow
If bachelor is walking on the road, he will
Be remembering his house.
Does he have child or wife?

He who doesn't have anything,
Has nothing to show off
If one has toes then one can hit
Toes on a stone
If you have buttocks, then you can
Suffer from chicken pox
If you don't have money, you won't Balance.
As if it is not the barren that one tells that
Infants bite the mother on the stomach

When one is celebrating
That is when death will strike
When you want to have everything
Forcefully, then you will die
Forcefully.

When one is walking with caution,
One can hardly have an Injured leg.
When fire starts burning (gidigidi) heavily
It will go down (piatapiata) gradually
When family has no lineage, the enemies rejoice

Interpretative Analysis

In Ekechukwu's poem, he used symbol extensively. Nnunu (salty) ngwa ngwa (fast movements) Ihe ojoo (evil) mmiri ilu (bitter water) ihe ike (misfortune) Symbolized evil that exist in the world while udo (peace), Ndi oma (good people), mma (good deed), mmanya (wine) Symbolised good people that exist in the same world. For the poet he want good and evil to be together, so that there will be Suppressor and Suppressed people with good luck and bad luck, Foolish people and wise people, good behavior, bad behavior.

The poet used these symbols to create different mental and special effects in the minds of the readers of how he want the world to be. For the poet, if the world will work, there shall balance between good and evil, goodluck, bad luck.

In Uwa by Nebolisa, Uwaezuoke, ahia, odudu, nkata symbolized that life is full of sorrow. In Ije uwa by Okoye, Oku, nwayoo nwayoo, gidigidi, and piatapiata symbolized that chasing things of the world is like chasing shadow, that it is better to slow down in pursuing things of the world.

However, both Ekechukwu, Nebolisa and Okoye used private symbols to indicate their different impression about the world and life.

Using Symbols to Showcase the Societal Ills

NAIJIRI A BU ENYIMBA (BY ONYEKAONWU)

Naijiri a bu Enyimba

o bu obodo oma

Nke na-enweghi atu

Lee ka esirizachasi

Onu ama ya niile

o na-eti zaa

Ka onwa kporo oku;

Uzo dum di na ya

Dicha larii, kwuruchaa piawam

Elu na ala gbaara ka ute

Naijiria bu Enyimba

Obodo ukwu Afrika

Na-echewe obodo ndi Afrika

Na-agbara ha ugu

Di ka agu si agbara umu ya

o na-akatọ ala dum
Ndi o bįara abĩa zoro ala
Na-arusa obodo Afrika
Dika o di na Saut Afrika
Zimbanwe na Monzambik
N’ihi na Naijiri a bu
Obodo mkpagbu na-adighi
Aruruala adikwaghi ya
Naijiria bu Enyimba
Obodo achoghi mmegbu
Lee! onwu umu akwukwo
Ndi uweoji igbagburu
Na Soweta
Na-agba ha anyammiri
N’ihi na a hubeghi
Ihe di otu a na y a
o buzi ike wapu mmadu
N’ihi asusu ha?
Na Naijiria,nke a buaru.
Naijiria amaghi mkpa
N’ihi na akunauba ya

Na-asu tumtum

Kpatara na o na-agbanye

Banki uwa mbibi ego

Naijiria bu Enyimba

Nigeria is a great nation

A gracious nation that
it cannot be compared to any

Behold how it is neatly swept

All the environment

Sparkling so brightly

Like a moon light

All the roads in it

Are all smooth and straightly built

Everywhere just like a sleeping mat

Nigeria is a great nation

A mighty country in Africa

That protects other African countries

And defends them

Like a lion defends his cubs.

She condemns all her atrocities

The white came and occupied Africa

Zimbabwe and Mozambique
Because Nigeria is a
Nation without any intimidations
Atrocities are never found there
Nigeria is a great nation
A Nation that never wants maltreatments
Behold! The massacre of students
Shot by politicians
In Soweto
That makes them cry
Because a thing like that
Has never been seen before
That of discriminations among people
Because of language differences?
In Nigeria, that is abomination
Nigeria never lacks
Because its wealthy resources
Are simply plenteous
Such that it lends
To the World Bank
Nigeria is a great nation.

INTERPRETATIVE ANALYSIS

Enyimba (great nation), Obodo oma (gracious nation), na-eti zaa (sparkling brightly), Kwurucha Piawaram (smooth and straight), Obodo ukwu (mighty nation), Agu (lion), Akunauba (wealthy), Bankiuwa (world bank). Symbolized how great Nigeria is in the World especially in Africa while Mkpukpu (intimidation), Aruruala (wickedness), Mmegbu (Maltreatment), Anyammiri (cry), Ikewapu mmadu (discrimination) Aru (Abomination) Symbolised how corrupt Nigeria is. When one started reading this poem, one would think at the first instance, that Nigeria is the biggest Nation in Africa and that its function is as important as the poet projects it. But when one reads down the description of the Giant nation, one begins to develop a different attitude towards it: indeed, it is better described as Nigeria as a country that needs help.

The poet in an ironical way presents Nigeria as it calls or presents itself to the outside world 'The giant of Africa'. What this poem actually means is a critical analysis of the evils and corruptions in Nigeria.

Okafor (2014:190) says "that the poet is criticizing Nigeria for paying less attention to her internal problems. Instead of finding solutions to these problems, Nigeria leaders go about giving aids both financial and otherwise to the outside world just to be recognized and respected by other foreign countries". Nigeria calls itself the Giant of Africa while in actual sense it is not. This is as a result of so many political, economic, religious and

social problems associated with Nigeria which the poet described using symbols.

UKO N'UJU (BY EMENANJO)

Keduzi ka a ga-esinodun'anyim
Were asona-akwo aka?
Kedu kwa nu ka a ga-esi nodu n'iyi,
Kwere ncha o baa anyin'anya?

Nkenu bi n'alana-apitammanu
Kariaosabiton'elu

Kooro m ihekpatarana
Mmadu ga-enwemgbuli,
Ma mgbui ana-aguya?

Ego a,
A sinaanyinweren'ijelijeli
Bu n'ikuku ka o di
Ego a,
A sianyina o bughiyabuokwu
Bu naanin'akwukwo ka o di

Kooro m ihekpatarana
Mmaduga-enweegbugbere
Ma anwu ana-ama yan'eze?
Nri a,
A sianyina o buaturu tawa,
Ezughiatuuga-ata,
Nke o na-afodurummadu.

Ugbu a,
Mmirina-afabanyezianyin'eze

Ebeanyina-achommiri a ga-anu
Anyina-elozuikwarataa
Na-atuzianyaerimerinwanneechi.

How can we be in surplus
Washing hand with spit
How can one be in stream
Allowing soap to enter our eyes

Nkenu that live on the ground
Is producing more oil than squirrel that live on top.

Eϕplain to me,
why someone will have mgbuli yet have
Appetite for mgbuli.

This money
They said we have in Billions
Is in the wind.
This money
They told us that is not matter
Is only in paper

Eϕplain to me why someone will have lips,yet sun
Shines on his/her teeth
This food
They said we have plenty is
Not even enough for the sheep
Not to talk of human beings

Now water is the gap of our teeth
When we are looking for water to drink

And we are swallowing coughi
Expecting food, next tomorrow.

Interpretative Analysis

In this poem Anyim, Aso mmiri symbolised corruption, injustice, unfairplay, embezzlement of fund, Insecurity meted on masses by the government. According to Nebolisa (2024:13) in Nigeria; allocation given to all state are not the same; some state are more favorable than the other. Ijeli, ikuku, akwukwo symbolized that Nigeria has wealth but only beneficial to political class. The masses are only hearing Ijeli (billions), to masses Ijeli (billions) is like akwukwo (paper) they are not feeling any impact at all.

Nri a (food) that they said are aturu tawa (surplus) are not even enough because people are dying of hunger on daily basis in Nigeria.

Mmiri (watery) and achommiri (longing for water) loziukwara (swallowing cough) and erimeri nwanne echi (enjoyment ahead) it symbolized that people are still believing that in future, government can change by rising to its full sheight to cater for its citizens.

Ills in the society are injustice, unfairplay, corruption and intimidation meted on masses etc. which the poet mentioned using symbols.

Conclusion

Symbols is the use of language to represent objects, actions, feelings, thoughts, ideas, states of mind and any sensory or eұtra-sensory eұperience. Poet enters the

world of language through symbols. A symbol is a vehicle for two things at once. It functions as itself and it implies meanings beyond itself. Literary artists provide those contexts so that the reader has enough information to determine the probable range of meanings suggested by a symbol. Through symbol, the speaker's experiences is compressed and simultaneously expanded in the personal experiences that each reader brings to the poem. The suggestive nature of symbols makes them variable for poet and evocative for readers. Consequently, symbol demands a measure of alertness on the part of the reader. The liberty enjoyed by poets to depart from the conventional standard rule of spoken and written language gives them the license to use symbol to achieve beautiful effects in their poems.

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